

COUNTRY HOSPITAL BOARDS

**456. Mr BRADSHAW to the Minister for Health:**

I refer the minister to his media release, dated 18 July 2001, on the future of country hospital boards.

- (1) Can the minister guarantee the future of existing localised country hospital boards beyond 2002?
- (2) If not, can the minister explain how he proposes to “strengthen the position of rural health services” if local country hospital boards are to be abolished?

**Mr KUCERA replied:**

I thank the member for his question.

- (1)-(2) A process has been clearly outlined in the Health Administrative Review Committee’s report on the way the Government should carry out consultation. That will occur as soon as the new director general comes on board. If the member looks at the structure of that report, he will see that we have elevated the role of rural health to an executive directorship, which will report directly to the Director General of the Department of Health. I know from sitting around corporate tables that unless people are at the table, they do not have a voice. Under the previous structure there were 71 disparate voices trying to talk to the minister. This structure will enhance the role of boards. It will also enhance the role of rural services generally. I expect that I will have the report early in the new year.